Arrests in capital for spying activities

291. SHRI D.B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the CBI has arrested some persons in the Capital during January, 1989 in connection with their alleged involvement in spying activities;

(b) if, so, the details of the persons arrested in this connection; and

(c) the action contemplated by Government against the persons involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Nirmal Puri was arrested on 6th January, 1989 under sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923. Shri Vinod Kumar Khanna, Chairman M/s. Concord International Pvt. Ltd. was also arrested on 25-10-88 in this case.

(c) On completion of the investigation under the provisions of Official Secrets Act, 1923, a complaint has been filed by the CBI in the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Delhi on 8-2-89 for the prosecution of Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Nirmal Puri and Vinod Kumar Khanna under Section 120-B IPC read with sections 3 and 5 of Official Secrets Act, 1923. The Court has taken cognizance of this case and the same is pending trial.

Central Directions on Pollution Control to States

292. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have directed the State Governments to set up working groups to review the status of pollution control in different industries;

(b) if so, what are the details of the steps taken by the State Governments in the matter;

(c) whether Government also propose to set up prototype unit for recycling of wastes for manufacture of useful products; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) The Government of India have requested the State Governments to form State Level Coordination Committees for the management of hazardous substances. So far 14 States/Union Territories (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi) have formed such Committees.

(c) and (d) Delhi Administration has taken up a project for setting up of six units for manufacture of fly-ash bricks.

Opening of Bank Branches in the Rural Areas

293. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased state:

(a) whether Government have directed the commercial banks to keep pending, opening of new branches in urban and metropolitan areas till requirements in rural and semi-urban areas are met;

(b) if so, what are the details of the commercial banks which have followed the directives of Government and opened branches in the rural areas; and

(c) what are the details of locations in rural areas where commercial banks have

opened branches and by when the banks will achieve the target of opening branches in the rural areas of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (c) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that it has not issued any directions to commercial banks to keep pending the licences in respect of centres in urban and metropolitan areas till the requirements in rural and semi-urban areas are met. However, the banks are advised to open branches at rural and semi-urban centres on priority. RBI upto 31.1.1989 has allotted 5966 eligible rural and semi-urban centres for opening branches under the current Branch Licensing Policy for 1985-90 and banks had opened branches at 2627 such centres. RBI has advised the banks to open branches at the remaining rural and semi-urban centres expeditiously preferably by 31.3.1989 with a view to implementing the Service Area Approach to rural lending.

Curbing of Black Money

294. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any efforts during the past few months to combat the menace of black money in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details of the steps taken in this regard; and

(c) what further steps Government contemplate to combat this menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (c) Combating tax evasion is a continuous process and the Government takes necessary legislative and administrative measures from time to time to curb generation, growth and use of black money. Some of the measures which are taken by the Income-tax Department are systematic survey operations, search and seizure operations in appropriate cases, verification of information by the Central Information Branches in a planned manner and in-depth investigation in a manageable number of selected cases.

In addition to the above steps, it is proposed to further augment the strength of officers at senior level in the Investigation Wing of the Income-tax Department for intensifying the efforts to combat tax-evasion.

Montreal Protocol on Environment

295. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Montreal Protocol limiting the production and emission of substances which deplete the Ozone layer has been signed by India;

(b) if not, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the views of the other Departments such as Defence, Petrochemicals and the DGTD have been obtained on the above Montreal Protocol;

(d) if so, what are their reactions; and

(e) how many other countries have so far signed the above Protocol and whether India has attended the Conference as an Observer and if so, what is Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) No, Sir.